

Campbell 2.e3.
(1-14).

To the Editor of
The West Highland Tales,
with Wm Robertson's
Historical regards -

Jan 4. 1879.

Janney Co. 1878

J. F. Campbell

Welding Lodge

Glennington

London W

Read, a return for my
speech in the proceedings of the
May Association October 1878

I have a lot of like stuff
in manuscript, written long
ago. —

NOTES ON FOLK-TALES.



Of all the branches of popular literature, the folk-tale has been of late years the most studied. Every country in Europe has contributed its share towards a general collection of stories current among the people, and numerous additions to the stock have been made by collectors in all parts of the world. But the contributions have varied greatly, both in volume and in worth. Germany led the way, and its wide field has been worked by more explorers than any other country has produced. Two of the largest and most valuable of recent collections have been made in Russia and in Sicily, Afanasief having published 332 Russian stories (Moscow, 1863), and Dr. Giuseppe Pitrè 300 Sicilian stories (Palermo, 1875), the texts being provided in each case with copious and excellent notes, and numerous variants being often given. England's share, on the other hand, has been a small one, confined to local collections. Ireland was early in the field, and the West Highlands of Scotland have yielded a rich harvest to Mr. J. F. Campbell, whose published collection contains 86 tales, besides many variants, and whose stock of as yet unprinted stories derived from Scotland and Ireland must be immense, for in 1862 he was able to say : " 791 is the number now reached, and the manuscripts would fill a wheelbarrow." But the folk-tales which have been collected and put upon record in England itself are by no means numerous, and they are often not very good of their kind. It is to be feared that it is now too late to remedy the neglect from which they have suffered. Mr. Campbell is inclined to think that many English folk-tales still exist, though it may not be easy to discover them. But the general opinion seems to be, that, although many local traditions have survived, as well as numerous short stories or anecdotes illustrative of rustic superstitions, especially of those relating to fairies,

yet the genuine popular tale, not derived from literature, but orally transmitted from generation to generation of the common people, not only is all but extinct, but has left behind it singularly few traces of its former existence. In early times it probably flourished in England as well as in other lands. But some as yet unexplained cause must have brought its career to an untimely end. Some students of the subject have attributed its decay to the Reformation, others to Puritanism or to the spread of education. But England does not stand alone so far as education or Protestantism are concerned, and its local and temporary Puritanism can scarcely have annihilated a flourishing branch of national fiction. Whatever the cause may have been, the evil it wrought seems irreparable ; unless, indeed, the efforts of the Folk-lore Society, working in concert over the whole face of the land, may succeed in doing for England as a whole what has been already done by single workers for some parts of it. As yet, the only writer who has devoted a special work to the tales of the whole kingdom is M. Bruyère,* but of the hundred stories which he quotes forty belong to Scotland, twenty-seven to Ireland, and four to the Isle of Man. In modern days the old English nursery tales appear to have given way to versions of the French adaptations of Perrault and his successors. Of the older stories, preserved in class-books and other works, two only appear to have a specially English ring about them, Jack the Giant-Killer and Tom Hickathrift. Not that those tales can be set down as original creations of the English mind, but they seem to have been naturalized in England at an early date, and to have remained for a considerable period comparatively free from foreign influence. Of Jack and the Beanstalk, moreover, something of the same kind may perhaps be said.

It is impossible to impress too strongly on collectors the absolute necessity of accurately recording the stories they hear, and of accompanying them by ample references for the sake of verification. The temptation to alter, to piece together, and to improve, is one which many minds find extremely seductive ; but yielding to it deprives the result of any value, except for the purpose of mere amusement. In

* *Contes Populaires de la Grande-Bretagne* par Loys Bruyère. Paris (Hachette) 1875.

this respect Mr. Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands* may be taken as a model. Nor can collectors be too impressively warned against the danger of drawing hasty inferences from the stories which come before them, of putting them forward as illustrations or proofs of some historical or mythological theory. The functions of a collector and a commentator differ widely, and it is seldom that the one is capable of accomplishing the other's special work. Patience, industry, and conscientiousness are the main qualifications required in the case of gatherers of material. But examiners and sifters of gathered stores ought to possess, in addition to these virtues, exceptional prudence and cautiousness, while the final dealer with the accumulated stores, he who is to turn them to ultimate account, to piece together scattered fragments, to resolve disorder into symmetrical arrangement, to rebuild out of shapeless ruins temples of ancient gods, must have still higher qualifications, wide and deep learning, matured judgment, and well-trained skill. That highly-qualified person does not seem to have yet appeared upon the scene.

So attractive, however, are the problems which folk-tales present with respect to their origin and meaning, that many fruitless attempts will probably be made to solve them before their destined solver arrives. Each of the two hypotheses which have been put forward to account for the existence, in so many lands, of similar popular tales has its own points of deep interest, its claims to arrest attention, to pique curiosity, and to stimulate devotion to its cause. No loftier origin, no more venerable parentage, can be assigned to any form of literature than that which is ascribed to folk-tales by scholars who recognise in them "heirlooms of the Aryan family"; who consider that they have been independently developed by the various branches of that family, from mythological germs which existed in the minds of our primæval ancestors, while they still inhabited their ancient home in the highlands of Central Asia. Viewed in this light, such a story as that of the *Sleeping Beauty* may well inspire a respect bordering upon veneration. In the world's morning-time, before the religious instincts of our ancestors had taken distinct shape or found articulate utterance, the idea may well have occurred to some of the more poetic among them that the revival of the earth in Spring resembled an

awakening from sleep. And from this simile may have sprung a legend of a maiden who slept through a space of time corresponding with or typical of the length of the winter season, and who then awoke to active life and enjoyment. This legend may easily have been carried away by the emigrants who successively moved southward or westward from their home, and it may have served as a theme for the story-tellers to enlarge upon for the benefit of their hearers, Asiatic and European, till each division of every branch of the Aryan family had its own cherished form of the ancient tale. If this explanation of the birth and growth of the story be accepted, and if other popular tales be credited with a similar history, there can scarcely be any limits set to the respect which their lineage ought to inspire, or to the value which ought to be attributed to them as illustrations of ancient beliefs.

But there is one difficulty which attends this method of accounting for the marked similarity which prevails among the various forms which some stories have assumed in divers lands. That similarity appears to be too great. Many mythologies and many languages have been elaborated from common mythological and linguistic germs by the nations into which the Aryan family has grown. And between the various systems of religion or speech a family likeness exists, but it is one which, except in a very few instances, can be recognised only by the eye of the trained mythologist or linguist. Lapse of time and altered circumstances so affected them that they lost, ages ago, so far as ordinary spectators were concerned, their mutual resemblance. But the tales preserved among the common people in a score of lands still offer similarities patent to every observer, not only their incidents being frequently alike, but the sequence in which these incidents follow each other being in many cases all but invariable. This difficulty is obviated if we can accept the other hypothesis, according to which at least a great part of the folk-tales now existing in Europe have been borrowed from the East. According to it, oriental story-tellers, ages ago, composed countless tales, often taking as their themes legends based upon mythological ideas common to all the Indo-European races, and their compositions became current in various parts of cultured Asia, at a time when by far the greater part of

Europe was still utterly destitute of anything approximating to culture. In the course of time these stories gradually made their way westward, becoming naturalised and somewhat modified in every land which they successively reached, until the whole European popular mind was saturated by this stream of oriental fiction.

If this hypothesis be correct, the folk-tales of Europe do not reflect European mythology, and cannot be used as evidence relating to it, except in so far as they are in many cases founded upon mythological ideas developed from germs common to the ancestors, both of the Easterns who elaborated those tales, and of the Westerns who borrowed them. Thus the inner meaning of the story of the Sleeping Beauty is, in accordance with European as well as Asiatic myths, apparently relating to the slumber of nature during the winter. But its outward form, its framework or setting, may be due to the artistic imagination of the East. This hypothesis, satisfactory as it may seem to be in explanation of the similarity prevailing among European variants of the same tale, is not deficient in its attractive difficulties, its fascinating puzzles. To account for the onward drift of the stories, their universal reception and preservation, is by no means easy. The effect produced upon mediæval European fiction by the translation of certain collections of Asiatic written tales has been made clear to all. The evidence which proves it is direct and indisputable. But with respect to the borrowing of tales preserved by oral tradition only indirect evidence can generally be obtained. A few instances occur in which language bears witness to a story's migrations. Thus the well-known substitution of *verre* for *vair*, in the French description of Cinderella's slipper, enables us to detect the French origin of some variants of her history. Whenever she is found wearing a slipper of glass, we may be sure that her story has at least been subjected to a French influence, and that at a comparatively recent period. Another instance of this kind of test is afforded by one of Mr. Webster's Basque legends. In it a man who tries to repeat a spell which he has heard a witch employ in order to fly through the air, says, "Over the clouds and under the hedges," instead of "Under the clouds and over the hedges," and suffers much in consequence of his error. Mr. Webster remarks, "The blunder is confounding *dessus*, over, and *dessous*, under. This shows that the tale is

originally French, or at least the witch's part of it; for this punning mistake could not be made in Basque." But such verbal tests as these are so rare that they do not supply any appreciable amount of evidence. The mention of animals unknown to Europe might seem to bear witness to the Asiatic origin of some stories, but such testimony is uncertain. As Professor Benfey has remarked, the lion, of which the German people know nothing except by hearsay, has long ago in popular opinion dethroned the old German king of the beasts, the bear. But in tracing the origin of a story such details are of slight importance compared with its general tenour, its inner meaning. Underlying the tales which have become popular favourites certain moral or mythological ideas are generally perceptible, an examination of which will, in at least many instances, give some clue as to the original home of those tales. It would greatly facilitate researches of this kind if some general system of classification of popular tales could be agreed upon, in accordance with which every story in a fresh collection could be referred at once to its proper place, might be designated by a number or a name. Some tales are manifestly capable of being reduced to order, and ranked under the names of some prominent and familiar member of the group to which they belong. Thus we may speak of Cinderella or Giant-Killer stories, with full assurance that we shall be generally intelligible and sufficiently precise. But there are others which are not to be so simply denoted, and which seem to require more elaborate formulas for their identification, perhaps resembling those used in chemistry. The most elaborate attempt at a classification of folk-tales yet made is that due to J. G. von Hahn, who prefixed to his collection of Greek and Albanian Tales (1864) a scheme for the reduction of such stories to their original elements, and their arrangement in divisions and groups. His plan was afterwards employed and modified by Mr. Baring Gould, whose classification of "Story Radicals" is appended to Mr. Henderson's "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties." Hahn arranges the stories with which he deals in three divisions, the first relating to family ties, the second to miscellaneous subjects, the third to contests of heroes and demons. These three divisions are subdivided into forty sections, to each of which is given, when possible, the name of the principal actor or actors in some well-known myth or story of the

group which it represents. A condensation of his synopsis, which occupies 16 pages of his work, may be attempted as follows :—

DIVISION I.—FAMILY.

SUBDIVISION A.—HUSBAND AND WIFE AFFECTED BY

(a) *Desertion.*

1. Psyche — Supernatural husband deserts wife.
2. Melusina.—Supernatural wife deserts husband.
3. Penelope.—Faithful wife recovers truant husband.

(b) *Expulsion.*

4. Calumniated wife banished but restored.

(c) *Sale or Purchase.*

- 5—6. Access to spouse or loved-one bought.

SUBDIVISION B.—PARENT AND CHILD.

(a) *Children longed for.*

7. They assume for a time monstrous shapes.
8. They are made victims to a vow or promise.
9. Their birth is attended by various wonders.

(b) *Exposure of Children.*

10. Amphion.—Babe exposed by unmarried mother.
11. Œdipus.—Babe exposed by married parents.
12. Danae.—Mother and babe exposed together.
13. Andromeda.—Daughter exposed to a monster.

(c) *Step-children.*

14. Little Snow-white. Stepmother persecutes girl.
15. Phrixus and Helle. Stepmother persecutes a brother and sister.

SUBDIVISION C.—BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

16. Youngest brother ill-treated by elder brothers.
17. Cinderella. Youngest sister ill-treated.
18. DioscURI. Twins help each other.
19. Sister (or mother) betrays brother (or son).
20. Sister saves brother from enchantment.
21. Heroine supplanted by step-sister (or servant).
22. Magic brothers-in-law assist hero.

DIVISION II.—MISCELLANEOUS.

(a) *Bride-Winning.*

23. Bride won by heroic exploits.

24. Bride won by ingenuity.

(b) *Abduction of Heroine.*

25. Proserpine. Heroine carried off by force.

26. Helen and Paris.

27. Medea and Jason.

(c) *Various Subjects.*

28. Swan-maidens robbed of garments and married.

29. Snake-brought herbs restore life.

30. Bluebeard. A Forbidden Chamber opened

31. Punchkin, or the Giant without any heart.

32. Grateful Beasts assist hero.

33. Hop-o'-my Thumb. Hero tiny but brave.

34. A strong fool works wonders.

35. Faithful John, or Rama and Luxman.

36. Disguisal of hero or heroine.

DIVISION III.—CONTRAST OF INNER AND OUTER WORLD.

37. Hero is killed by demon, but revives.

38. Hero defeats demon.

39. Hero tricks demon.

40. Lower world visited.

Mr. Baring Gould arranges his stories according to 51 "Story-Radicals." They form two main divisions, the first containing "Family Stories," the second "Various." The first division is subdivided into four classes, relating to : 1. Husband and Wife; 2. Parent and Child; 3. Brother and Sister; 4. Persons Betrothed. The second also contains four classes, relating to: 1. Men and the Unseen World; 2. Men matched with Men; 3. Men and Beasts; 4. Luck depending on the preservation of a Palladium.

These attempts at orderly arrangement are of much practical use. But their weak point is that in them too much attention is generally paid to the mere framework of the story, the setting, which often

varies with time and place ; more stress being often laid upon the accidental than the essential parts of a tale. It may, perhaps, be allowable to suggest a different method of classification. Stories might be divided, first of all, into two divisions—mythological and non-mythological. The mythological stories ought then to be arranged, so far as is possible, according to the principal myth which they appear to illustrate or embody, little attention being paid to the mere framework of the story, to the fact that the human actors in it are few or many, are bound by parental or fraternal or matrimonial ties. The non-mythological stories, among which would be classed many which deal accidentally with mythological beings, might be divided into moral stories, puzzles, jokes, &c.; the moral stories being arranged according to the leading ideas which were in the mind of the teacher who first shaped them, the others being classified in any manner found practically convenient. If some such system could be universally adopted, story-comparers would be spared much loss of time and labour. The results of an attempt thus to classify the collection made by J. and W. Grimm will be given at the end of this article.

It is often, no doubt, difficult to decide whether a story ought to be classed under this or that head. But most tales, if a sufficient number of their variants are collected and compared, offer some salient points, some prominent features, which may be taken as their true characteristics. By way of illustration of the preceding remarks, a few cases in point may be mentioned. Almost all the tales about Grateful Beasts, of which Puss-in-Boots is the most familiar representative, are manifest expansions of moral apologues intended to show that man ought to behave with kindness towards the brute creation. The idea that the lower animals ought to be humanely treated is of recent date in Europe, in some parts of which it has made little progress even at the present day. But it prevailed in Asia ages ago, the Buddhists laying special stress upon the duty of respecting all animal life, and striving to impress the necessity of so doing upon the minds of their disciples by means of numerous fables and tales. A favourite subject with these teachers was the striking contrast offered by the ingratitude of man and the gratitude of beasts, one which makes itself clearly apparent in every complete version of Puss-in-Boots.

In European visions of that tale this contrast is often wanting, the ultimate unkindness of the man to the cat or other animal being omitted. Or else the original opening of the story is lost, that in which a reason is given for the animal's devotion to the man, which ought to be due to its gratitude for kindness or forgiveness. No version has yet been found in the West which is as complete and as consistent as that which was discovered in the Caucasus, and has been given by Schiefner in his collection of Avar Tales. In it a miller traps a marauding fox, but allows it to go free. Its gratitude induces it to play the part attributed in our version of the story to the domestic cat, a comparatively recent importation into fairyland, the only stipulation which it makes being that it shall receive at its death an honourable funeral. The enriched and ennobled miller forgets his obligations to the fox. It pretends to die, and he is about to consign it to an unhonoured grave, when it returns to life, and reduces him to penitence by threatening to disclose the secret of his lowly birth.

Another cat story probably belongs to the same class of moral tales originally intended to inculcate humanity towards animals, the legend of Whittington. That it was known several centuries ago in Persia is proved by literary evidence, but it probably existed at a much earlier period in India, where variants of it may still be current. Some of the Russian variants seem to be worthy of mention on account of the evidence they bear to the moral nature of the tale. In one (Afanasief, v. 32) a labourer works conscientiously for three years. At the end of each year he receives a copeck from his employer, which he drops into a river, saying, "If I have served justly and faithfully my copeck will not sink." And when he does this for the third time all three copecks float on the surface of the water. He takes them back and they bring him good luck. One of them he gives to a man who is going to a church, telling him to spend it on a candle to be burnt before a holy picture. Being dropped in the church, the coin takes fire, and illuminates the whole building. With another he purchases a cat which, in a catless region much plagued by rats and mice, is exchanged for three ships. With these ships he sails to a land where, by the aid of the third copeck, he is enabled to save from a demon a princess whom he afterwards marries.

In another story (Afanasief, vii. 22) the youngest of three brothers, who is a simpleton, lays out the money he has inherited in the purchase of a dog and a cat. The dog afterwards assists him, when he is living alone and in poverty, by providing him with food. The cat he ships as merchandise on board a vessel which is going to sea, and which comes to a land where "rats and mice are as plentiful as blades of grass in a field." The captain goes ashore with his goods and carries the cat along with him. A merchant invites him to his house, and gives him a bed in a barn which is infested by rats and mice. In the morning the host goes thither, expecting to find nothing left of his guest but bare bones. To his astonishment the captain is alive and well ; the cat is just finishing the last rat. Whereupon the merchant buys the cat for six caskfuls of gold. Now comes the most characteristic part of the story. The simpleton is greatly puzzled as to how he shall spend the three caskfuls of money which fall to his share. At length he wanders through towns and villages, giving money to the poor, until two of the casks are emptied. With the contents of the third he buys incense, which he burns in the open air. Its sweet savour goes up to heaven, and suddenly an angel appears, saying, "The Lord has bid me ask what thou wishest to have." In doubt what to reply, he consults an old man, who says, "If riches are given thee, may be thou wilt forget God ; better choose a wise wife." The simpleton does so, and never has reason to repent of his choice.

More important than the moral are the mythological stories. Some of these may fairly be resolved into nature-myths. The story of the Sleeping Beauty has already been mentioned as a probable expansion of an idea suggested by the apparent awakening of nature every spring from her winter sleep. And all the tales of the Cinderella class, in which an originally brilliant being is reduced to a state of temporary obscurity or eclipse, but is eventually restored to his or her pristine splendour, are probably based upon similar notions connected with the phenomena of day and night or of the seasons of the year. As the nature-myths clustering around the sun or the storm, into which many of these stories seem to be resolvable, were common to European and Asiatic mythology, the fact that they underlie a number of European tales cannot

by itself be used as evidence of their original domicile. But there are also mythological ideas familiar to the East, but not to Europe, which seem to have given rise to certain groups of folk-tales. These tales cannot be explained in accordance with any known system of European mythology; or at least can be rendered intelligible only by such a stretch of the "solar theory" as is apt to inflict damage upon a system of explanation which is capable of doing good service if not too violently handled. But they are perfectly in accordance with mythological ideas still prevailing in the East; they can be thoroughly explained as embodiments of those ideas; and they coincide in many respects with tales which are current among many oriental peoples.

To insist upon recognising nature-myths in these stories appears to be injudicious, though their mythology may possibly be capable of being traced back to an earlier form, which may have had reference to beneficent luminaries and hostile powers of darkness. In many cases the kernel of the story, after we have stripped off the outer shell which time and travel may have disfigured, seems to be decidedly oriental, and in those cases we may be allowed to assume that it has come to us from some oriental source. As specimens of this class of mythological tales may be taken all such stories as *Beauty and the Beast* or the *Frog Prince*. The numerous stories of this class which are to be found in Asia seem to be based upon the idea, familiar to Indian mythology, that a divine or semi-divine being may be compelled to assume the form of a mortal, even of one of the inferior animals—of a snake, an ape, or a frog—and to retain that form, either constantly or during certain periods, until the spell or curse to which the compulsion is due becomes broken. As a general rule the outward form assumed is a species of husk, which can be donned or doffed in an instant; and on the preservation or destruction of that husk by its discoverers, during the temporary absence of its usual wearer, depends the continuance of the spell. In the Indian forms of such a story, the leading idea being intelligible to its narrators, the tale itself generally remains intelligible, and, within the limits allowed to such fiction, reasonable. But the European variants, handed down by generations of tellers to whom the mythological basis of the story was quite unfamiliar, have often lost those pretensions to probability which even a

fairy tale should possess, that respect for consistency which no storyteller should ignore.

As an illustration of the confusion of ideas to which this transference of tales into alien lands gives rise may be taken one of the numerous stories relating to destiny. These stories form a large group connected with the mythological class, inasmuch as they deal with mythological beings, but properly belong to the moral class, since they are intended to inculcate the doctrine that human life is ruled by fate, that no man can escape from his allotted doom. Fatalism has never completely overpowered any of the western nations, though it has long exercised no slight influence for evil in several parts of Europe. The belief of classic times in Fates, Moirai or Parcæ, divine beings who allot to each human life, at its commencement, its span and tenour, has survived to our own days in the popular faith of Greece in *Moirais*, of Italy in *Sorti* and *Fate*, and of Western Europe in the Fairies, whose name, as well as some of their attributes, appear to have descended through the *Fate* from the ancient Fates. But on the energetic nations of Northern Europe, in spite of a theoretic belief in Norns and similar beings, the idea of an inexorable destiny, relentlessly controlling man's free will, seems never to have got a firm hold, and in their popular tales it does not play a specially prominent part.

An old historian asserts that the ancient Slavs had no belief in fatality, that their mythology recognised no Fates. This seems to have been too sweeping an assertion ; but they do not appear to have developed the idea of an all-controlling destiny so fully as the Hellenic and Italic races, from whose descendants they afterwards borrowed their religious systems. On Russia the influence of the fatalistic East has been considerable, and to this day remains a source of much harm ; but the belief in luck and destiny which it has inspired is vague and uncertain, and scarcely calculated to take definite form in such a story as the following, which is taken from one of the Russian romances called "builinas." The hero Sviatogor is told by an old man, whom he finds spinning threads of destiny, that he is doomed to marry a certain maiden whose skin is like the bark of a tree. He goes to inspect her, finds her asleep, and, not liking her looks, attempts to escape from his fate by cutting her throat. Then he goes away, think-

ing he has killed her. But his sword has merely perforated her bark-like outer cuticle, without inflicting any other injury upon her than a trifling cut. When she awakes and gets up, that species of husk splits and falls off, and the true skin which it discloses is soft and fair. Time passes by and Sviatogor meets, admires, woos, and wins her. Observing one day, after the marriage has taken place, a scar upon her throat, he asks her how it was caused. She tells him how, years before, she was covered by a sort of husk, and how it was split by a sword-cut, which some stranger dealt her as she lay asleep in such and such a place. And when her husband hears the wondrous tale he silently marvels, perceiving that no man can ever escape from his destined wife. This is a good specimen of a story which in its European form is unreasonable, even when all due allowance has been made, and which, though manifestly mythological, is not to be fully explained by what we know of the ancient mythology of the country in which it is found ; but of which an Asiatic variant exists whereof the details are reasonable and the mythological meaning intelligible.

In China wedding cards are connected by threads, in reference to which the following story is told. A traveller once found an old man spinning mystic threads by which he was told couples destined to be wedded were linked. Asking whom he was destined to wed, he was told the name and abode of a certain damsel. He went to look at her, found she was a poor and neglected orphan, and hired an assassin to kill her. But his agent only wounded her. She recovered, grew up, and was adopted by a wealthy official. Whereupon her destined husband courted and married her. After the wedding, he asked her why she always wore a flower hanging over her forehead. She replied that it was to hide the scar left by a wound received in early youth, and proceeded to relate the history of her attempted assassination. Whereupon the Chinese husband mentally made the same observation which occurred to the Russian Sviatogor. It is probable that the part of the story which relates to a destined marriage has been borrowed by the Russian tale from Asia. The incident, on the other hand, of the husk which is split by the sword-cut appears to be taken from the Scandinavian story of Brynhild's Magic Sleep, unbroken till the re-

moval, by means of Sigurd's sword, of the corslet which has, as it were, grown to her body.*

One of the most popular of the world's folk-tales, being found in very many countries far apart, is that which relates the adventures of three comrades, usually but not invariably brothers, who contend with some demoniacal being, which escapes from them into an underground abode. One of them follows it, lowered by the others, and kills it. In its dwelling he finds much wealth, together with three fair princesses. These his comrades hoist out of the abyss. But him they leave to perish below. He escapes, however, generally by means of a grateful bird, and returns home to punish his treacherous companions. The story has various openings, the companions sometimes being the three sons of a king, whose garden or orchard is ravaged by a monster which they go forth to kill. Sometimes the demoniacal being appears in the shape of a dwarf, who overcomes two of the party but is worsted by the third. One of these dwarf stories will serve as a good specimen of the similarity which occurs between some tales widely current in Europe and also familiar to races which, not belonging to the Aryan family, can scarcely be supposed to have inherited Aryan mythological germs, and to have independently developed from them the folk-tales which they possess.

A Lithuanian tale (Schleicher, No. 38) tells how the hero Martin went into a forest to hunt, accompanied by a smith and a tailor. Finding an empty hut they took possession of it; the tailor remained in it to cook the dinner, and the others went forth to the chase. When the dinner was almost ready, there came to the hut a very little old man with a very long beard, who piteously begged for food. After receiving it he sprang on the tailor's neck and beat him almost to death. When the hunters returned they found their comrade groaning on his couch, complaining of illness, but saying nothing about the

* The idea of a destined wife, combined with a recollection of the ring of Polycrates, is found in our ballad of "The Fish and the Ring," in which a knight attempts to destroy a maiden whose horoscope told him she was fated to become his wife. He is about to throw her into the sea, when he relents, and throws in his ring instead, vowing that he will not marry her till she produces the ring—which she eventually does, having found it in a fish.

bearded dwarf. The next day the smith suffered in a similar way. But, when it came to Martin's turn, he proved too wary and too strong for the dwarf, whom he overcame, and whom he fastened by the beard to the stump of a tree. But the dwarf tore himself loose before the hunters came back from the forest, and escaped into a cavern. Tracing him by the drops of blood which had fallen from him, the three companions came to the mouth of the cavern, and Martin was lowered into it by the two others. Within it he found three princesses, who had been stolen by three dragons. These dragons he slew, and the princesses and their property he took to the spot above which his comrades kept watch, who hoisted them out of the cavern, but left Martin in it to die. As he wandered about disconsolately, he found the bearded dwarf, whom he slew. And soon afterwards he was conveyed out of the cavern by a flying serpent, and was able to punish his treacherous friends, and to recover the princesses, all three of whom he simultaneously married.

Variants of this story will be found in most of the large European collections. But a specially interesting parallel is afforded by a Calmuck story (Jülg's *Kalmükische Märchen*, No. 3) borrowed from an Indian source. The hero, Massang, and his three companions, in the course of their wanderings, found an empty house, of which they took possession. One of them remained at home to cook, the others went to the chase. To him who remained in the hut appeared an old woman, only a span high, who asked for food. Having obtained a morsel, she immediately seized the remainder and disappeared. The hunters returned from the chase, and found no dinner ready. But their comrade was ashamed so tell the truth, and declared that a band of foes had pillaged the hut. For three days running the same thing happened. Each of Massang's companions was tricked by the little old woman, who cleared the board and disappeared. But, when Massang's turn came to remain at home, he was on his guard against her tricks, and when she used force, marvellously strong as she proved to be, he was too cunning and too strong for her, binding her fast and beating her till the blood streamed forth. At last she got away and disappeared. But by her blood-gouts Massang and his companions traced her to a cavern. Into this Massang was let down by a

rope, and found the little old woman lying dead, with heaps of gold and jewels around her. These Massang sent up to his companions, who took them and went away, leaving him down below. Eventually he escaped, found his faithless companions, pardoned them, and went his way.

The origin of the Calmuck tale is known, the *Siddhi-kür*, from which it comes, being the Mongol form of the Indian *Vetālapanchavins'ati*. How it found its way into Lithuania we do not know, but it seems much more probable that it was, like the Calmuck tale, borrowed from India than independently developed from a Pan-Aryan mythological germ. These Mongol tales have a special interest, inasmuch as critics of the school of Benfey ascribe to the Mongols, in consequence of their long ascendancy over so large a part of the East of Europe, a great influence upon European popular fiction. According to them, India, the early home of so immense a mass of stories, was the source from which the folk-tales of the present day streamed forth, originally disseminated by the Buddhistic peoples, and subsequently further transmitted by the Mahommedans.

One of the best of the tales of the *Siddhi-kür* may be taken as a specimen of a large group of stories which are at the same time mythological and moral; supernatural personages being introduced, but acting in such a manner as to teach, though unintentionally, a moral lesson. The leading idea in all the stories of this class which have kept true to their original forms is the same. Two persons of opposite characters are contrasted in them, the one meritorious, the other undeserving. The former is rewarded, the latter punished. But in the course of time and travel the contrast between the moral natures of the actors has sometimes been obscured, and their rewards or punishments appear to be capriciously allotted to them, being the result of accident rather than of justice. In the Mongol tale (Jülg, No. 14) the human actors are two brothers, the one of whom is poor, the other rich and avaricious. The poor man finds in a forest a number of Dakinis, demons of the fairy tribe, who possess a wonder-working hammer, which enables its wielder to obtain everything for which he expresses a desire. When the spirits have flown away, he carries their hammer to his home, and there by its aid provides himself with wealth. His

greedy brother, seeing this, compels him by threats to reveal his secret. As soon as he hears of the hammer and the spot in which it was found, off he sets, presumably to see what he can find there to his own advantage. But on his arrival he is pounced upon by the demons, who assume that he is the stealer of their hammer, and who proceed to punish him by stretching his nose and tying nine knots in it. After which they allow him to go home. His sole hope of getting his nose-knots untied lies in the magic hammer owned by his brother, who is induced, by the promise of a large reward, to attempt to cure him. Eight of the nine knots are successfully unloosed by the hammer's tap. Then the patient is induced by his wife and his avarice to send his brother away, and refuse payment for the incomplete operation. As the hammer-bearer leaves the house, the wife snatches the magic implement from him, slams the door after him, and returns in triumph to complete the cure. But, using the hammer unskilfully, she hits her husband so hard with it that she splits his skull asunder. He dies, and she and all his goods pass to the brother whom he had tried to cheat.

In this story the merits or demerits of the contrasted persons are not very different. For, if the one refuses to give anything to his poor brother, the other declines to help his suffering brother unless a rich reward is promised him. In a Japanese story * two men are contrasted who differ only in the quality of their dancing. According to it a man who had a wen on the right side of his face took refuge one stormy night in a hollow tree. After a time a number of elves arrived, who proceeded to drink and to dance. When they had finished the man came forth from the tree, and "now stretching himself out, now drawing himself together, with quips and cranks and every gesture he was master of, went circling round the entire area, singing in a drunken voice the while." The elves were delighted, invited him to come again, and to ensure his doing so took from him his wen, and kept it as a pledge. When he returned home with a smooth face, his next door neighbour, who had a wen on the left cheek, inquired about his cure,

* Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," i. 276. The version quoted above was supplied by Mr. J. C. Hall to Mr. Charles Goodwin, who printed it in a lecture read before the Asiatic Society of Japan, March 17, 1875.

and determined to take advantage of the information he received. So he also passed a night in the hollow tree. The elves arrived, and inquired if the dancer had come. The man appeared, but his performance was very inferior to that of his predecessor. After he had made "an awkward attempt at a dance," the elves were so displeased that they determined he should have his pledge back, and should not be invited to come again. So one of them took the wen and threw it at him. And it stuck on his right cheek, "so that now he had a wen on both sides of his face."

In several variants of the same tale found in Ireland, Brittany, Spain, and elsewhere, the supernatural actors are fairies, the human beings contrasted are hunchbacks. As the story is well known it may be very briefly noticed. The genial and melodious hunchback, hearing a number of fairies singing the names of some of the days of the week, improves their song by the addition of the names of some more days. The fairies are delighted, and reward him by taking off his hump, removing it, according to one version, "with a saw of butter." When he returns home, another hunchback, a man of a morose character, and with no ear for music, becoming envious, and hearing how and where he has been cured, determines to follow his example. He seeks the fairies, and finds them singing the new version of their song, upon which he shouts out an addition to it, hoping for a reward. But his contribution displeases them so much, that they take his predecessor's hump and clap it on the top of his own, from which it can never be removed; so he has two humps instead of one. According to some variants he was so punished because he shouted out Sunday; according to others, because he omitted to do so. But his real crime, doubtless, was, that he sang badly and not to the purpose.

Much nearer to the original meaning of the story has kept one of the most widely-spread of the popular tales of this class, the "Two Wanderers" of Grimm (No. 107), and the "True and Untrue" of the "Tales from the Norse." In it the moral is so obvious that no change of time or place has sufficed to obscure it. In all the versions, which are very numerous, the leading incidents remain the same. One of two travellers takes advantage of the other's need, and deprives him of his eyesight. Sometimes the blinding is the consequence of a wager,

sometimes the victim's eyes are the price of food necessary to keep him from starvation. But the result is the same. He is left by his heartless blinder to perish. But overhearing a conversation between spirits, witches, or animals, he learns how to recover his sight, and to perform certain wonders which render him wealthy. His wicked companion, finding out what has happened, goes to the spot where the conversation took place, hoping to benefit by it. But the conversers, imagining that he is their former overhearer, tear him to pieces. Dr. Reinhold Köhler, in a note on the first of Widter and Wolf's *Volksmärchen aus Venedig*, has given references to about twenty European variants of the story.

To these may be added a curious specimen of the Asiatic variants, taken from the Kirghis tales contained in Radloff's great collection of South Siberian folk-lore.* A good man and a bad man were travelling together, and the good man's food came to an end. Appealing to his companion for advice, he was recommended to cut off his ears and eat them, which he did. When they were consumed, he again appealed to his comrade, who persuaded him to have his eyes taken out, on which he lived for two days. Then his bad companion deserted him, leaving him alone in a dark forest. As he sat there he heard a tiger, a fox, and a wolf holding converse together, and learnt that two neighbouring trees had the power of giving ears to the earless and eyes to the blind; that the bones of a certain rich man's black dog could bring back the dead to life; and that a hill not far off contained a mass of gold as large as a horse's head. Before long he had obtained from the trees new eyes and ears, and from the hill the mass of gold, with which he bought the rich man's black dog. By means of its bones he restored to life a Khan, who gratefully bestowed upon his reviver his daughter and half of his cattle. So he became rich and prosperous. One day his former companion came to see him, found out the secret of his recovery and prosperity, and said, "O my Good One, take me to the dark, dense forest and leave me there! Perchance to me, as well as to thee, may it be given to become a man of mark. Thy two eyes did I take from thee, both thine ears did I take, and I left thee in the forest; there didst thou become a right fortunate man. Now then do

* Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Siberiens, iii. 344.

thou also put out my two eyes, cut off both my ears, and take me to the forest where I left thee, and leave me there." So the good man did as he was requested, and the earless, eyeless bad man remained in the forest alone. But when "the fox, the wolf, and the tiger, all three together, examined the interior of the forest, there, at a certain spot, they found the bad man, and they all three ate him up. 'From good comes good, and from evil comes evil,' said they all three, and ate him up."

This story is very popular in Russia, Afanasief giving in his collection no less than seven different variants of it. In the introduction to one of these (i. 10) considerable modern additions to the original narrative have been made. Two wayfarers dispute as to whether it is better to live honestly or dishonestly, and refer the question to three men whom they successively meet on the way. The first is a peasant who is ploughing his lord's land. He affirms that it is impossible for rustics to live honestly, for if they do not use deceit their masters will work them so hard that they will have no time to give to their own fields. The next person they meet is a merchant, who gives his opinion that in commerce dishonesty is much better than honesty—"People cheat us, and we cheat also." Next comes a species of law clerk, and he also decides in favour of dishonesty, adding "For honesty they'll send you to Siberia, saying you're a pettifogger." In spite of all this the upholder of honesty still maintains his opinion, but all goes ill with him. After a time, in order to get a morsel of bread, he is obliged to allow his antagonist to blind him. In his distress he prays to God: "O Lord, desert not me, thy sinful servant!" Then a voice is heard from heaven telling him what to do in order to recover his eyesight. After this the story proceeds in the usual way.

Next in importance to the Moral and Mythological Stories come the numerous tales which appear to have had no higher purpose than to amuse their hearers, or at most to exercise their ingenuity. Riddles were always extremely popular in the East, and some of the stories turning upon their use have made their way westward. From the same quarter, also, seem to have come a number of tales propounding some other kind of problem. A specimen of each class may be taken as illustrations of the effect produced by time and travel upon a story, of

the extent to which its original incidents may be altered, and at the same time of the vitality which some stories possess, the tenacity with which they cling to an idea or an expression, even after it has become so much the worse for wear that the substitution of a new one might be expected. These specimens come from the West of Scotland, where tales which have been transmitted from Asia are likely to prove less intelligible than their variants in Eastern Europe.

One of Mr. Campbell's Tales (No. 17b) is to the following effect. There were two brothers, each of whom had a son. One of them died, leaving his son to the other's care. When the orphan boy grew up, he dreamed one night of "the most beautiful lady there was in the world," and resolved to marry her. So he borrowed money from his uncle, and went in search of her. At length he found her in London, of which city her father was the Baillie, described his dream to her, and discovered that she also had dreamed of him. She told him to go home for a year, and then come back to marry her. He did as he was bid. And on his way to London the second time he met a Sassanach gentleman, who asked him why he was going there, saying that he was himself on his way to marry the Baillie of London's daughter. The lad replied: "When I was there last I set a net in the street, and I am going to see if it is as I left it. If it is well, I will take it with me; if not, I will leave it." Afterwards the two wayfarers came to a river, across which the Highlander carried the Sassanach. When they reached London the Sassanach gentleman went to the Baillie's house. There he described his Scotch fellow-traveller, particularly mentioning his absurd statement about the net. The girl guessed at once who the youth was. So she left her father's house and married her Highland lover.

Now let us turn to a Russian variant of the tale (Afanasief, v. 49). There were once two merchants. The one lived at Moscow, the other at Kief. To the former was born a girl and to the latter a boy. And the two fathers agreed that the children should marry one another, so the two infants were formally betrothed, the boy's father paying down a large sum of money as a pledge. Eighteen years passed by, and no further intercourse took place between the two merchants. At the end of that time the Moscow man, hearing nothing from his Kief friend,

promised his daughter's hand to a colonel. Just about that time the Kief merchant sent his son to Moscow to look after his betrothed. On the way he came to a river over which there was a difficulty in crossing. At that moment up came a stranger, who turned out to be the colonel who was to marry the Moscow merchant's daughter. "Why are you going to Moscow?" asked the colonel. "There is a lake there," replied the youth. "In that lake eighteen years ago, my father set a snare. And now he has sent me there with these directions: 'If a duck has fallen into the snare, then bring away the duck; but if there be no duck, then bring back the snare.'" After which he enabled the colonel to cross the river. On his arrival in Moscow the colonel went to the merchant's house, where he described the youth and his riddle. The girl guessed who the youth was, and sent her maid to inquire after him. When she had ascertained that he was really her betrothed, she said to her father, "Your proposed bridegroom does not suit me; I have my old sweetheart here. With his father were hands struck together, was an agreement made fast." So the colonel was sent away, and the betrothed children became man and wife.

The commencement of the Russian form of the story is evidently far more reasonable than that of the Gaelic, the betrothal of the children giving a better reason for the girl's behaviour than the double dream. And so is its termination. For the Russian father gives his consent to his daughter's marriage in consequence of an appeal to his conscience. But the Baillie of London is tricked into giving his daughter away. "It is the law of this country," said that young lady to her lover, "that no one must be married unless the Baillie himself gives her by the hand to her bridegroom." And this the Baillie is induced to do, unaware that the disguised damsel whom he gives away is his daughter. This finale, as well as the incident of the double dream, seems to be due to another Eastern tale. One of the stories of the Tooti Nameh (24th Evening) tells how the infant son of one vizier was betrothed to the infant daughter of another. And the children grew up together, and studied in the same school. But, just as their wedding was about to take place, the King ordered the girl's father to give her in marriage to one of his officials. The lovers were in despair. But there was an

old custom of the country, in accordance with which a bride, on the evening of her wedding day, was expected to go out to a certain holy place, and there to remain alone and pray. Advantage was taken of this by the lovers, the bride escaped from the holy place, her brother having disguised himself in her wedding garments and passed himself off for her, and all went well.

The other Scotch story is that told by an old man to the three brothers of the tale of "The Inheritance" (Campbell, No. 19). Two lovers were betrothed, but poverty postponed their marriage. Meantime the girl's father compelled her to marry a rich suitor. On the wedding-night the bridegroom found the bride in tears, and asked her why she wept. She "told him all about it, and how she was pledged to another man." Whereupon he took her in her wedding-dress, and left her at the house of her betrothed. But he, not to be outdone in generosity, fetched a priest, and in his presence, "loosed the woman from the pledge she had given, and he gave a line of writing that she was free, and he set her on the horse and said: 'Now return to thy husband.'" On her way back she was stopped by three robbers in a wood. But when they had heard her story one of them said: "Come, as the others have done this, I will take you to your home myself." And he kept his word, refusing, moreover, to take the money she offered him; but his companions took it instead. The three brothers to whom this story was narrated had been left a sum of gold by their father, who ordered them to divide it fairly among them. But, before the division could take place, one of them stole the whole of it. The old man, being requested to name the thief, told the story of the betrothed lovers to the three brothers, and then asked them which of the actors in it had behaved the best. The eldest decided in favour of the husband who gave up his wife to her betrothed, and the second in favour of the betrothed who restored her to her husband. But the youngest said that "the wisest of all were the robbers who got the money." Whereupon the old man decided that the youngest brother must be the thief.

This story, as Dr. Reinhold Köhler has pointed out, is merely a well-known Eastern romance which occurs in the Arabian Nights, the Forty Viziers, the Tooti Nameh, and elsewhere; and Prof. Benfey has

indicated (*Gott. gel. Anz.* 1858, pt. 55) the Sanskrit originals both of the story and the framework in which it is set. In the Turkish Tooti Nameh (Rosen, i. 243) it takes the following form.

A man who was carrying a jewel as a present to a king was robbed of it on the way. His suspicions fell upon three of his travelling companions, but he said nothing to them about his loss. When the king's daughter heard what had happened, she sent for those three men, and told them a story. In Damascus, she said, once lived a fair maiden, who so greatly admired a rose which she saw one day in a garden, that she promised she would grant any wish expressed by the person who should obtain it for her. Thereupon the gardener brought her the rose, and said his wish was that she would visit him in the garden upon her wedding day, after the marriage ceremony was over. And she promised so to do. After a while she was married, and, when the ceremony was over and she was left alone with her husband, she told him of her promise to the gardener. Thereupon he, "into whose mind falsehood and deceit had never entered," told her to keep her promise, but to come back quickly. So she went forth in her wedding array, covered with gold and jewels, to the garden, where the gardener was impatiently awaiting her arrival. On the way she successively encountered a wolf which wanted to eat her and a robber who wanted to plunder her. But first to the beast and then to the man she told the story of her promise, and how her husband had given her leave to keep it. And the minds of the wolf and the robber were so affected by her tale that each of them allowed her to pass on untouched. So she reached the garden safely, and told the gardener what had occurred. And when he had heard of her husband's respect for her plighted word, and of the generous abstinence of the wolf and the robber, he also was touched and respectfully escorted her back unharmed to the dwelling of her husband, with whom she lived happily ever after. Having told this story to the three travellers, the princess asked which of the actors in it seemed to them to have behaved the best. Then one replied that the wolf must have been old and toothless, otherwise it would have been mere folly on its part to let slip such a prey; and another said that the robber must have been an utter idiot to act as he did; and the third expressed a

similar opinion with respect to the gardener. Whereupon the princess came to the just conclusion that men who could give utterance to such sentiments must be capable of theft, and had doubtless stolen their fellow-traveller's jewel.

Many other similar instances might be brought forward of stories now current in different parts of Europe as folk-tales, preserved by oral tradition, which were centuries ago written down in Asia and imbedded in books. But those which have been given will serve to show how much caution must be exercised by collectors and commentators ; how necessary it is to compare many versions of a story, and to trace it up, so far as is possible, to its original form, before attempting to decipher its meaning, or to decide on its evidence questions relating to the early history of the people among whom it is found.

Before taking leave of the subject, let us attempt a rough classification of the contents of the best known of all collections of folk-tales, that of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Of the 200 stories which it contains,* 103 may be styled non-mythological, although many of them deal with supernatural beings, and some of them are evidently based upon myths. Of these 103, we may call 50 comic. The largest groups into which the comic tales separate are one of thirteen stories about simpletons, mostly of the Gothamite class ; and another of nine, describing various forms of trickery. There are five exaggeration tales of the Munchausen type ; four jests about women ; four stories explaining the origin of some animal peculiarity or the like ; and three jokes about laziness. The remaining twelve may be arranged under nine different headings. The class of what may be called "ingenious devices" contains eight stories, most of which are unimportant. To the didactic or moral branch may be assigned forty-three tales. Of these eleven are animal tales ; five belong to the "grateful beasts" cycle ; and five to the group of stories in which good and bad conduct are contrasted and recompensed ; two are in praise of filial reverence and two of industry ; and two show that "murder will out." The remaining sixteen illustrate as many different wise saws or moral

* Exclusive of the Appendix of ten *Kinderlegenden*, and also of the variants given in Bd. III.

axioms. There are also two robber tales, which demand a separate place.

If we turn to the far more important mythological division, we find that its ninety-seven tales may be arranged as follows :—The heading of “Husk Myths” may be given to a group of ten stories, of a species which has already been described, two of them telling the tale of Beauty and the Beast, and two that of the Frog Spouse. Various metamorphoses, of a different character from the changes of shape described in the “Husk Myths,” form the subject of thirteen other transformation stories. With these two groups may be classed, under the general heading of “Magic and Witchcraft,” twelve tales, in which the actors employ spells, or are assisted by such magic implements as seven-leagued boots and the like, or by such magic helpers as Fine-Ear and his associates. To the group of tales for which the heading of “Eclipse Myths” has been suggested may be assigned sixteen stories. Three of these narrate the similar adventures of Cinderella and Allerleirauh, and four those of the Sleeping Beauty. More than once occur also the stories of the heroines, whom, for the sake of convenience, we may style the “Calumniated Wife” and the “Supplanted Bride,” and of the brilliant being who for a time hides from sight the splendour of “Goldenlocks.” As probable nature-myths there may be classed with these stories of eclipse four tales relating to destruction and restoration—tales in which the dead are brought to life, or the old are made young. In almost all mythological stories demons, or wizards and witches connected with demons, naturally play a part. But in some of them the demon, or his human representative, figures so prominently that it may be convenient to draw them up under his banner. They refer, of course, to female as well as male demoniacal beings, but for the moment we may assume that the demon is of the male sex. Of such “Demon Stories” we have at present thirty-one to deal with. These may be arranged in groups referring to such subjects as the following : The Demon’s Abode, as in Beanstalk Stories wherein the heroes who seek him or his victims have to climb, or as in tales about hostile dwarfs whom they have to follow underground ; or his physical characteristics, such as his possessing Three Golden Hairs, or being one eyed like Polyphemus, or “having no heart in his body”

like Punchkin ; or his tendency to annoy women, who are like Andromeda exposed, or like Rapunzel immured, or like Proserpine carried off. But the largest group will always be that of tales referring to the demon's struggles with mankind, in which he is ultimately worsted, being either destroyed, or at least robbed, tricked, or otherwise humiliated. Certain supernatural beings will probably require to be treated separately. The collection with which we are dealing, for instance, contains two stories about elves or fairies, and two about the Three Fates. There remain to be dealt with seven as yet unclassified tales. Two of them belong to the large class of stories about the dead. Two describe the career of Thumbling, a hero whose mythological significance has not yet been definitely ascertained ; * one refers to the puzzling myth of the Golden Goose ; one is based upon the belief that snakes have to do with treasures ; and one accounts for the existence of the Moon. The themes named in this rough approximation towards a classification are of course illustrated by many stories besides those assigned to each of them ; for almost all the tales deal with many subjects in addition to that which has been selected as their characteristic for classifying purposes.

W. R. S. RALSTON.

* A strong case in favour of his being identified with a small star known as the "Conductor" of "Charles's Wain," has been made out by M. Gaston Paris, in his excellent monograph entitled "*Le Petit Poucet et la Grande Ourse*." (Paris, 1875.)



